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ACTION SCT-03

RELEASED IN FULL

INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-17	ACDE-00	AID-01	ARA-01	A-01	CA-02
	CCO-00	CG-00	CIAE-00	SMEC-00	COME-00	CTME-00	OASY-00
	DODE-00	DOEE-00	DOTE-00	DS-00	EB-01	EUR-01	FAAE-00
	FBIE-00	FBO-01	H-01	IMMC-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	INSE-00
	JUSE-00	LAB-01	L-01	ADS-00	M-00	NEA-01	NRCE-00
	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OCS-06	OIS-01	OMB-01	OPR-01	PA-01
	PM-00	PRS-01	P-01	SNP-00	SP-00	SR-00	SSO-00
	SS-00	TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00	USSS-00	ASDS-01	PMB-00
	DSCC-00	DRL-09	G-00	/055W			

-----7FC707 211929Z /38

R 211420Z OCT 94  
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2591  
INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO  
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO  
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ  
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PM  
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA  
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
AMEMBASSY ASUNCION

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BUENOS AIRES 006980

E.O. 12356: N/A  
TAGS: PTER, PREL, AR

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SUBJECT: THREE-MONTH ANNIVERSARY OF AMIA BOMBING:  
- CYNICISM AND AN UNSOLVED CASE

REF: BUENOS AIRES 05380

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POLL RESULTS  
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1.. (U) A RECENT ARGENTINE POLL INDICATED THAT:

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(A) SEVEN OF 10 ARGENTINES THINK THEIR GOVERNMENT WILL NEVER FIND THE PEOPLE WHO BOMBED ARGENTINA'S JEWISH MUTUAL ASSOCIATION (AMIA) ON JULY 18,

(B) ONLY 11% OF THOSE INTERVIEWED THINK THE GOVERNMENT IS WORKING HARD ON THE INVESTIGATION, AND

(C) EIGHT OF 10 CONSIDER THAT SECURITY MEASURES SHOULD REMAIN IN PLACE THROUGHOUT THE JEWISH COMMUNITY.

2. (LOLL) THE POLL, CONDUCTED IN THE FEDERAL CAPITAL AND GREATER BUENOS AIRES FOR THE CENTER-LEFT "PAGINA 12" NEWSPAPER, COMES THREE MONTHS AFTER THE BOMBING. IN THAT TIME, ARGENTINES HAVE REVERTED TO THEIR CUSTOMARY PESSIMISM ABOUT THEIR JUSTICE SYSTEM AND HAVE VIRTUALLY WRITTEN OFF ITS ABILITY TO RESOLVE THE AMIA CASE. THERE IS ALSO AN EVIDENT LACK OF CONFIDENCE ABOUT THE GOVERNMENT'S RESOLVE AND SERIOUSNESS IN PURSUING THE INVESTIGATION.

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THE JUDGE  
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3. (C) JUAN JOSE GALEANO, THE FEDERAL INVESTIGATING JUDGE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CASE, IS FIGHTING AN UPHILL PUBLIC RELATIONS BATTLE. HE HAS WORSENERED HIS SITUATION BY INEPTLY MANAGING THE PRESS. ALTHOUGH HE ONCE ENJOYED A REPUTATION AS A MAN OF INTEGRITY WITH A FUTURE IN PUBLIC LIFE, HIS INCOMPETENCE IS -- PROBABLY UNJUSTLY -- NOW POPULARLY TAKEN AS A GIVEN. HIS INVESTIGATION SEEMS STALLED IN A BLIND ALLEY. HE HAS HELD FIRMLY TO HIS ORIGINAL HYPOTHESIS THAT IRANIAN DIPLOMATS HELPED HEZBOLLAH ORCHESTRATE THE ATTACK, AND HE HAS LEFT THE IMPRESSION THAT OTHER POSSIBLE LEADS ARE BEING IGNORED. HIS CONCLUSIONS MAY WELL BE SOUND, BUT HIS ATTEMPTS TO EXPLAIN THEM IN PUBLIC HAVE RARELY SERVED TO INCREASE HIS CREDIBILITY, WHICH HAS COME UNDER REPEATED ATTACK SINCE THE BOMBING.

4. (U) IN A RECENT INTERVIEW, GALEANO CALLED HIMSELF A "PERRO DE PRESA," A HUNTING DOG, AND SAID THAT HE IS CLOSE TO HIS PREY. YET, HE ADDED, HE DOES NOT WANT TO PREJUDICE THE RESOLUTION OF THIS COMPLEX CASE, AND SO CANNOT REVEAL ALL THE "COLORS" OF HIS QUARRY.

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LURCHING TO ANOTHER METAPHOR, GALEANO ADDED THAT "FOR NOW," HE PREFERS "TO BE 100 METERS UNDER THE WATER, BUT ALWAYS WITH MISSILES PREPARED."

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WITH FEW DEFENDERS  
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5. (C) NATIONAL DEPUTY MIGUEL ANGEL TOMA, JUSTICIALIST PARTY CHAIRMAN OF THE CONGRESS' INTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY COMMISSIONS, VIGOROUSLY DEFENDED GALEANO IN A CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF OCTOBER 18. CITING STATISTICS THAT INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR "OVER 80 PERCENT" OF ALL TERRORIST ATTACKS HAS NEVER DETERMINED, TOMA OBSERVED THAT THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT HAD DISMANTLED MUCH OF ITS SECURITY APPARATUS Q' "DIRTY WAR." THE 1992 BOMBING OF ISRAEL'S EMBASSY IN BUENOS AIRES AND THE AMIA ATTACK HAD LAID BARE THE RESULTING INSTITUTIONAL WEAKNESSES. THERE REMAINED CONSIDERABLE APPREHENSION ABOUT GIVING TOO MUCH POWER OR TOO MANY RESOURCES TO INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES DESPITE INTENSE PUBLIC PRESSURE OVER THE AMIA BOMBING AND THE GOVERNMENT'S OWN DESIRE TO COME UP WITH THE CULPRITS.

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CALLS FOR JUSTICE  
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6. (U) MEANWHILE, FAMILIES AND FRIENDS OF THE BOMBING VICTIMS PUBLICLY CALLED OCTOBER 17 FOR RESOLVING THE CASE. THEY CALLED FOR "JUSTICE, INVESTIGATION, INFORMATION, RESPECT AND A COUNTRY WITHOUT IMPUNITY WHERE WE CAN GO OUT ON THE STREET

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BUENOS AIRES 006980

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WITHOUT FEAR, WHERE WE CAN SEND OUR CHILDREN TO SCHOOL  
WITHOUT FEAR, WHERE THIS TERROR WILL NEVER AGAIN FIND  
A PL  
ACE." A NUMBER OF OTHER PUBLIC PROTESTS MARKED  
THE THREE-MONTH ANNIVERSARY.

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COMMENT  
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7. (C) PUBLIC OPINION HAS QUICKLY AND PERHAPS PREMATURELY ADDED GALEANO'S AMIA INVESTIGATION TO THE LIST OF ARGENTINE INSTITUTIONAL FAILURES. ARGENTINES LACK FAITH IN THEIR CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM, AND HAVE RAPIDLY SUPPLANTED HOPE FOR PROMPT JUSTICE WITH CYNICISM AND ANGER. THE ANGER ASSURES THAT PUBLIC PRESSURE IN THE FORM OF PROTESTS, MARCHES, AND CALLS FOR JUSTICE IS CERTAIN TO CONTINUE. PEOPLE HERE, PARTICULARLY WITHIN THE JEWISH COMMUNITY, ARE UNWILLING TO FORGET OR TO FORGIVE A FAILED INVESTIGATION.

8. (C) ADDED TO THESE DOMESTIC PRESSURES, INTERNATIONAL CRITICISM OF THE AMIA INVESTIGATION MAY ALSO BE RISING. THE EMBASSY HAS SPOKEN TO SEVERAL ARGENTINA-BASED FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS IN RECENT WEEKS, ALL OF WHOM APPEARED TO BE WRITING ARTICLES ABOUT THE "FAILED" INVESTIGATION AND VOICING DOUBTS

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ABOUT THE EFFECTIVENESS AND CREDIBILITY OF THE GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS TO CLEAR THE MATTER UP. WHILE WE HAVE PRIVATELY UNDERLINED OUR BELIEF IN THE GOOD FAITH OF GALEANO AND THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT AS A WHOLE, THERE ARE MANY OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY WHO SHARE THE PUBLIC'S SKEPTICISM HERE EITHER FROM -- APPARENTLY UNFOUNDED -- SUSPICIONS OF SOME ALLEGED NEO-NAZI CONNECTION TO THE ATTACKS OR THE LINGERING BAD REPUTATION OF ARGENTINA'S SECURITY FORCES.

9. (C) WE SEE NO SIGNS THAT GALEANO IS MAKING REAL PROGRESS IN HIS INVESTIGATION, YET TO BE FAIR TO HIM, EVEN THE WORLD'S BEST LAW ENFORCEMENT INSTITUTIONS FIND SUCH CASES DIFFICULT -- AND OFTEN IMPOSSIBLE -- TO SOLVE. AN EXPLOSION OF A 1000 POUND BOMB LEAVES LITTLE PHYSICAL EVIDENCE. GALEANO AND THE POLICE HAVE HANDLED THIS INVESTIGATION BETTER THAN THEIR COLLEAGUES DEALT WITH THE BOMBING OF ISRAEL'S BUENOS AIRES EMBASSY IN MARCH 1992, BUT THERE IS A WIDE MARGIN FOR IMPROVEMENT. THE FAILURES ARE AT ROOT INSTITUTIONAL. THE RESOURCES AT GALEANO'S DISPOSAL

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ARE POOR. HIS INVESTIGATION IS UNDERSTAFFED,  
UNDERFUNDED AND UNDERTRAINED. HE CANNOT RELY ON THE  
CONSISTENT COOPERATION OF THE ARGENTINE FEDERAL POLICE  
OR THE STATE INTELLIGENCE SECRETARIAT. IN SHORT, THE  
PUBLIC'S IMPATIENCE WITH THE PACE OF THE AMIA  
INVESTIGATION IS WELL FOUNDED, BUT IRE WOULD BE BETTER  
FOCUSED AT THE WEAKNESSES OF THE ARGENTINE STATE THAN  
AT THE FAILURES OF A PARTICULAR JUDGE IN A MOST  
DIFFICULT INVESTIGATION.

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